
R-20-67
Meeting 20-14
July 23, 2020

AGENDA ITEM #2

To: Board of Directors
Open Space Authority

From: Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager

SUBJECT

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve Public Access at Llagas Creek: Update and Feedback Requested

REVENUE/COST

The projected total construction cost for the project is estimated to be \$900,000. Staff is seeking grant opportunities to cover at least a portion of the costs for this project.

BACKGROUND

In Fiscal Year 2018/2019, a bridge connection over Llagas Creek at Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve, near the existing staging area and Llagas Creek Loop Trail, was identified as a priority capital improvement project. This project would serve to facilitate public and operational access to the 1,858-acre southern portion of the preserve, formerly known as Blair Ranch. Currently, staff is working with a team of consultants to develop a plan for a new accessible interpretative day-use area accessed via a new bridge crossing Llagas Creek to serve hikers, bikers, equestrians, and visitors for educational programming.

To determine project feasibility, site inventories and analyses were conducted between spring and summer of 2019 for biological and cultural resources, hydrology and hydraulics, and geotechnical conditions. The engineering firm, Waterways Consulting, and landscape architecture firm, Restoration Design Group (RDG), have used these studies to develop initial designs for a bridge and day-use area complimenting the existing Llagas Creek Loop Trail and staging area at Casa Loma Road. See Exhibit A, *Project Location Map*, for site location and proposed features in relation to the existing staging area.

A public joint Use and Management/Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting was held on site in April 2018. Members of the Committee and public who attended the meeting found the proposed project to be in keeping with the intent for access to other areas of the preserve and a desirable addition to the existing staging area and accessible loop trail at Casa Loma Road. A project webpage was created in December 2019 to provide regular project updates to the public. Through the website, there is an opportunity for members of the public to review project information, as well as sign up to receive project updates.

Conceptual design alternatives for the Llagas Creek bridge and day-use area were developed and reviewed by an interdepartmental staff and consultant team from January – March 2020. Next steps will be to develop construction documentation and determining permitting, and CEQA requirements. Additionally, staff is currently scoping a feasibility study to ascertain the best routing to reach the

portion of the preserve formerly known as Blair Ranch while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources. Once the bridge and day-use area are completed, visitors will be able to access the southern reaches of the preserve through our self-guided “Open Access Days” program in the short term, with longer term multi-use trail access based on the results of the feasibility study. The schedule for the bridge and day-use area will be based on permitting and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis as well as funding and grant awards. Funding for construction is expected in Fiscal Year 2021/2022.

DISCUSSION

The Rancho Cañada del Oro Llagas Creek Bridge and Day-Use Area public access project will provide improved public and operational access. In addition, the design will facilitate the Authority’s accessible environmental education programming by providing a series of use areas designed to accommodate groups of varying size. The design incorporates existing natural features and provides additional features such as picnic tables, seating, and interpretive elements. The bridge crossing and meadow day-use area will be designed for accessibility, meeting Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) *Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas*, connecting the existing Llagas Creek Loop Trail (a paved accessible trail) to provide an experience for visitors with a range of abilities. The bridge will also protect stream habitat by eliminating the need to ford the creek.

Staff will provide an update on the project design progress, scope, schedule, and budget. Following the presentation staff will request feedback and comments from the Board of Directors and members of the public. Staff will also seek feedback from the Citizens’ Advisory Committee and public attendees at the upcoming meeting on July 27, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is to provide the Board and members of the public with information on the proposed project and to seek feedback from meeting attendees. A presentation will be provided and added to the project website following the meeting.

Prepared by:
Lucas Shellhammer

Attachment(s): Exhibit A – Project Location Map